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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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> *"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!*
> *Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;*
> *And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."*
>
> John Hay.

In Defence of Prison Bars.

A gratifying sign of a tendency to æsthetic sanity on the part of the public was shown recently in the prompt protests of the readers of the "Age of Thought" against the announced purpose of its editor to abandon the new typography (which he has rather happily named the "end-space style") in order that he might scatter through his columns, without loss of typographical uniformity, the patent-medicine puffs which his advertisers send him in the form of "electros" in the old style. The gratification is enhanced, too, by the fact that the protests must have possessed sufficient intrinsic weight to convince Comrade Fulton of his error. That they did is shown by his decision to adhere to the end-space style, for he, being, like myself, an editor who aims to suit himself first and his readers afterward, is not a man to yield to the mere insensate clamor of public opinion. It is clearly established, moreover, that he is of the stuff of which martyrs are made, since no editor who was less than a martyr could possibly bring himself, even to sustain his paper and thereby further the cause, to so far do violence to his finer sensibilities as to alternate, at three-inch intervals, his wise words of economic and political counsel with advice to the reader to "educate his bowels with Cascarets" and to "cure his constipation forever by the use of candy cathartic." If I were not convinced that this heroic course is a deliberate and stoical subordination of the less to the greater; if I thought for a moment that Comrade Fulton was indifferent to the inartistic incongruities which he thus imparts to his editorial pages,—I should be tempted to express my amazement at his presumption in taking the name of art upon his lips to stigmatize the vulgarity inherent in my nature that prevents me from discarding from Liberty the brass rules which serve to separate its columns.

Speaking of his own page, which contains three narrow columns of leaded minion type with no rules between the columns, he pronounces it good, and continues: "While the columns are slightly narrower than Liberty's, the abominable column rules—like prison bars; out of date with high-class periodicals and out of harmony with the end-space style, being similar to a seersucker coat and a chimney-pot hat—that appear in that paper spoil what might be an artistic effect." This being the second or third time that Comrade Fulton has referred to this subject, I conclude that he desires a battle over it. In that case I am disposed to accommodate him. Let us consider, then, this vulgarity of mine. It is indicted in three counts. The first is that it is like prison bars. What of it? Prison bars, in themselves, are not necessarily ugly. They are revolting only when they deprive life of liberty. To inanimate things there are no prison bars. That which has not the power of motion is as free when barred as when unbarred. When prison bars protect, or guide, or serve a purpose of any sort, without depriving life of liberty, they are useful things; and, in the right hands equipped with the right means, they may be decorative as well. Does Comrade Fulton insist that no pictures shall be framed, because frames are prison bars? Evidently not, for he goes to great pains to put elaborate borders around the advertisements in his paper. I dislike them, but not because they are borders. I dislike them, because they are ugly. When my eye craves the satisfaction of a border that is a thing of beauty, I open a book issued by William Morris from his Kelmscott Press. But, if I cannot have Morris or the equal of Morris, I want no decoration at all. When Fulton (as artist) offers himself in place of Morris, not only is my eye unsatisfied; it is positively shocked. And I can no more accept Fulton when he tears down prison bars that serve a useful purpose than when for decoration he erects prison bars that do not decorate. The second count is that column rules are "out of date with high-class periodicals." What is a high-class periodical? Comrade Fulton must have a prison bar of his own (for all definitions are prison bars) for the separation of periodicals into classes. According to my prison bar, I make a conservative estimate when I say that nine high-class periodicals retain the column rule for every one that has discarded it. The fact does not prove that the column rule is a good thing, but it does prove that the column rule is not out of date. The third count is that column rules are "out of harmony with the end-space style." I assert, on the contrary, that the absence of column rules is out of harmony with the end-space style. In proof of this one need but look at that strikingly handsome paper, the "Conservator," which "justifies," and note how much less objectionable the absence of the column rule is in its pages than in those of the "Age of Thought," which does not "justify." When the columns on a page present straight edges both at right and left, the eye less needs the aid of a column rule to prevent it from reading continuously from the line of one column into the opposite line of the column adjoining; for the two straight edges separated even by a narrow space serve as a prison bar (or guiding limit), though less efficiently than a column rule would so serve. But, when the column presents at one of its sides a ragged edge, as in the end-space style, there is a tendency on the part of the eye, in the case of the longest lines, to read continuously into the column adjoining, and hence the end-space style *especially* requires the column rule.

The fact is that Comrade Fulton, like some others, has blindly followed a typographical movement which had a *raison d'être* at its origin, but which was continued irrationally after its *raison d'être* was satisfied. Twenty years ago it was common among printers to overload their pages with various display devices,—ornaments, scrolls, heavy borders, and fancy rules and dashes. The effect was "cheap and nasty." With improvement in taste a current set in away from display and in the direction of typographical neatness and modesty, decoration being less and less attempted except in special work where real art could be afforded. Among the first to join in this current, I excluded from Liberty all purely decorative signs, and adopted a style of severe simplicity, reducing all divisional rules and dashes to the single line. But at this point, where I had gotten rid of tawdry ornaments, and at the same time enhanced the usefulness of the divisional marks by making them serve their purpose *inconspicuously* and with a due sense of their subordination, I stopped. But there were others in this current, who, never having known at any time the object of the current, reached the goal all unconscious of arrival, and so, with eyes still tightly closed, drifted straight on, and discarded divisional marks altogether. Or, to change the metaphor, they threw out the baby with the bath. Now, it is their mistake that Comrade Fulton shares. And at what expense he shares it I venture to say that he little dreams. The base of the column rule used in Liberty is ten points in thickness. (Let me explain to the uninitiated that a "point" is a typographical unit.) But Comrade Fulton, not using column rules in the "Age of Thought," and feeling perhaps the liability of the eye to read across two columns, increased the space between the columns to twelve points at the start, and has now doubled it to twenty-four points,—fourteen points in excess of the thickness of Liberty's column rule. A little calculation will enable

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Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Principle and Finance.

At a recent dinner of the Chicago Iroquois club, a Democratic organization, Mr. E. O. Brown, known to Liberty's readers as a strong individualistic Single Taxer, delivered an address on "The Future of Democracy." I am not concerned here with the prospects of the Democratic party, so-called, or of the chances of reconciling and remarrying the divorced gold and silver wings of the organization. Mr. Brown, I may say in passing, thinks that the Dingley-Aldrich tariff affords an admirable opportunity for a successful assault upon Republicanism, and he urges Democrats to sink their differences on all other questions and to reform the lines of the party "upon an issue involving a deeper and higher question of personal liberty and natural rights." Elaborating this suggestion, Mr. Brown expressed himself as follows:

> For it seems to me that we Democrats, gold men and silver men alike, ought to recognize that the Democratic principle—the principle, that is, that informs and gives life to the Democratic party wherever and whenever that party has real life and vigor—is something more than a matter of detail or of mere finance. When the financial question means the question of taxation; when it relates to the taking of real wealth, the product of labor, from a man's hands who has produced it, to apply it at the will of the majority to purposes of which that man may entirely disapprove,—for that is what taxation means,—then the financial question is indeed a vital one to the Democratic party.
>
> In the natural evolution of business and its methods, in the extension of banking facilities, it may be in the triumph of the really democratic principle of absolute freedom of contract, and the abrogation of all legal-tender laws, the currency question will certainly find a solution. But the essential principle of the Democratic party is something more than a question of business methods; it is fundamental; it is belief in and the advocacy and defence of personal, individual liberty.

These propositions are open to serious criticism, and are truly astonishing in the mouth of a clear and consistent (except on the land question) individualist. If Mr. Brown had merely said that economically the financial question—the question of the volume of currency, the system of banking, and the basis of circulation—was of little importance, one could pass it over as a characteristic Single-Tax notion. To the orthodox Single Taxer the battle of standards as now waged is a sad waste of energy and betrayal of ignorance of the real causes of existing industrial maladjustments. One is aware of this crotchet, and prepared to make the necessary allowance for its logical implications, when controversy is not deemed profitable. But Mr. Brown's proposition means much more; he actually asserts that the tariff issue involves a deep and high general principle, while the currency question "is a matter of detail." It is only when the financial question means the question of taxation, the expropriation of producers at the will of the majority, that it is a vital one to the Democratic party, while it is a secondary and minor matter, hardly worth quarrelling over, when it is a question of the kind and amount of circulation. The fundamental Democratic question of individual liberty has little or nothing to say about these "details."

Well, let us see. To begin with, Mr. Brown contradicts himself. He guardedly says—guardedly, on account of his audience, which was not prepared to receive unadulterated libertarian doctrine—that "it may be in the triumph of the really democratic principle of absolute freedom of contract, and the abrogation of all legal-tender laws, the currency question will certainly find a solution." (Parenthetically I may ask Mr. Brown, who demands precision and accuracy of everybody else, and will therefore pardon my rather verbal point against him, how that which "may be" can be "certain" at the same time.) This is plainly equivalent to saying that the theoretical and logical solution of the financial question, from the Democratic standpoint, must be found in abolition of legal tenders and in absolute freedom of note-issuing and banking. It follows, clearly enough, that the existing financial system is not democratic, but paternalistic and governmental, and that no Democrat can consistently acquiesce in it, or in any modification of it which falls short of freedom. But, if so, how can Mr. Brown say that the Democratic principle of liberty is not involved in "mere finance?" How can he say that banking and standards and circulation are mere matters of detail? The contradiction is so flagrant that Mr. Brown's failure to detect it can be accounted for only by reference to the Single-Tax bias and tendency to treat the financial question with scornful and undisguised contempt. Prejudice is notoriously fatal to logical reasoning and consistency.

But, without dwelling on this characteristic slip, let me examine the strange proposition that the tariff system of the Republicans or other protectionists involves a more serious invasion of individual liberty than the existing currency system. "When," says Mr. Brown, "the financial question means the question of taxation; when it relates to the taking of real [note the "real"] wealth, then the financial question is indeed a vital one to the Democratic party." And, pray, how does the government prevent freedom of note-issuing? One of the means is a tax of ten per cent. on all circulation not authorized by the banking law. This tax is prohibitive, and does not lead to the direct taking of "real wealth"; but surely Mr. Brown will not argue that a prohibitive tariff tax which prevents imports altogether is less objectionable than one which enhances prices and takes "real wealth."

I will not here make any statement which Mr. Brown will question. I will not assert that the restriction on note-issuing takes real wealth by forcing borrowers to pay higher rates of interest than would prevail under free banking, since Mr. Brown may dispute this proposition. It is sufficient for my purpose to remind him that free banking is prevented by the tax on unauthorized circulation and by the fines and imprisonment attached to violations of the banking laws. Is not, then, the question of finance vital to Democracy when it means the question of restricting the issue of circulating media by prohibitive taxes and penalties,—when it means monopoly secured by legal and arbitrary means?

Perhaps Mr. Brown had this thought in mind: that, since, as a matter of fact, neither the gold Democrats or the silver Democrats stand for the democratic principle in finance; since neither wing advocates cessation of governmental tampering, or proposes to do away with artificial regulations,—both might as well drop the subject in favor of one on which they do take a democratic position. From a Single-Tax standpoint such advice would not be unnatural, although every impartial observer knows that the money question is now "up" for settlement, and will not be sidetracked or obscured at the bidding of those who want harmony restored in Democratic councils. But, if Mr. Brown meant to convey the suggestion indicated, his language in no wise expressed it. It expressed something entirely and radically different—and something absolutely and astonishingly wrong. V. Y.

Anarchy is Order.

[Continued.]

III.—THAT THE INDIVIDUALIST DOGMA IS THE ONLY FRATERNAL DOGMA.

Let no one talk to me of revelation, of tradition, of Chinese, Phenician, Egyptian, Hebraic, Greek, Roman, Teutonic, or French philosophies; outside of my faith or my religion, for which I am accountable to nobody, I have nothing to do with the vagaries of my ancestors; I have no ancestors! For me the creation of the world dates from the day of my birth; for me the end of the world will be accomplished on the day when I shall restore to the elementary mass the apparatus and the afflatus which constitute my individuality. I am the first man, I shall be the last. My history is the complete result of humanity; I know no other, I care to know no other. When I suffer, what good do I get from another's enjoyment? When I enjoy, in what do those who suffer detract from my pleasures? Of what consequence to me is that which happened before me? How am I concerned in what will happen after me? It is not for me to serve as a sacrifice to respect for extinct generations, or as an example to posterity. I confine myself within the circle of my existence, and the only problem that I have to solve is that of my welfare. I have but one doctrine, that doctrine has but one formula, that formula has but one word: ENJOY! Sincere is he who confesses

it; an impostor is he who denies it.

This is bare individualism, native egoism; I do not deny it, I confess it, I verify it, I boast of it. Show me, that I may question him, the man who would reproach and blame me. Does my egoism do you any harm? If you say no, you have no reason to object to it, for I am free in all that does not injure you. If you say yes, you are a thief, for, my egoism being only the simple appropriation of myself by myself, an appeal to my identity, an affirmation of my individuality, a protest against all supremacy, if you admit that you are damaged by my act in taking possession of myself, by my retention of my own person, —that is, the least disputable of my properties,—you will declare thereby that I belong to you, or, at least, that you have designs on me; you are an owner of men, either established as such or intending to be, a monopolist, a coveter of another's goods, a thief.

There is no middle ground; either right lies with egoism, or it lies with theft; either I belong to myself, or I become the possession of some one else. It cannot be said that I should sacrifice myself for the good of all, since, all having to similarly sacrifice themselves, no one would gain more by this stupid game than he had lost, and consequently each would remain quits,—that is, without profit, which clearly would make such sacrifice absurd. If, then, the abnegation of all cannot be profitable to all, it must of necessity be profitable to a few; * these few, then, are the possessors of all, and are probably the very ones who will complain of my egoism.

Every man is an egoist; whoever ceases to be one becomes a thing. He who pretends that it is not necessary to be one is a thief.

Oh, yes, I know, the word has an ugly sound; so far you have applied it to those who are not satisfied with what belongs to them, to those who take to themselves what belongs to others; but such people are in the human order; you are not. In complaining of their rapacity, do you know what you do? You establish your own imbecility. Hitherto you have believed that there were tyrants. Well, you are mistaken; there are only slaves. Where nobody obeys nobody commands.

Mark this well; the dogma of resignation, abnegation, self-sacrifice, has been preached to the people. What has been the consequence? Papacy and royalty, by the grace of God, resulting in castes of bishops and monks and princes and nobles. Oh! the people long ago resigned themselves, renounced themselves, annihilated themselves. Did they do well? What do you think about it?

Certainly, the greatest pleasure that you can give to the somewhat discountenanced bishops, to the assemblies that have replaced the king, to the cabinet ministers who have replaced the princes, to the prefects who have replaced those grand vassals, the dukes, to the sub-prefects who have replaced those petty vassals, the barons, and to the whole series of subordinate functionaries who stand to us in the stead of the knights, *vidames*, and lordlings of feudalism,—the greatest pleasure, I say, that you can give to all this nobility fattening on the public revenues is to reenter as speedily as possible into the traditional dogma of resignation, abnegation, and self-sacrifice. There you will still find not a few protectors who will tell you to despise riches at the risk of ridding you of them; there you will find not a few devotees who, to save your soul, will tell you to be continent, in everything except the protection of your wives, daughters, and sisters from annoyance at their hands. Thanks to God, we are not lacking in devoted friends who would accept damnation for our sake, if we would decide to gain the heavens by the old path of the beatitude, from which they politely step aside, in order doubtless not to bar our passage.

Why do all the perpetuators of the old-time hypocrisy no longer feel at ease on the scaffoldings erected by their predecessors? Why? Because abnegation is declining and individualism is growing; because man is acquiring sufficient confidence in his own good looks to be willing to throw off his mask and show himself at last as he is.

Abnegation is slavery, degradation, abjection; it is the king, it is the government, it is tyranny, it is struggle, it is civil war.

Individualism, on the contrary, is enfranchisement, grandeur, nobility; it is the man, it is the people, it is liberty, it is fraternity, it is order.

IV.—That the social contract is a monstrosity.

Let each individual in society affirm himself personally, and only himself, and individual sovereignty is founded, there is no more room for government, all supremacy is destroyed, man is the equal of man.

Meanwhile our social life is mortgaged to all by contract.

Rousseau invented the thing, and for sixty years the genius of Rousseau has been dragging in our legislation. It is by virtue of a contract, drawn by our fathers and renewed later by the great citizens of the Constituent, that the government enjoins us to see, hear, speak, write, and do only what it may permit.

Such are the popular prerogatives the alienation of which constitutes the government of men; this government I call in question so far as it concerns me, at the same time leaving to others, if they desire it, the privilege of serving it, of paying it, of loving it, and, finally, of dying for it.

But even though all other Frenchmen should consent to be governed in their education, in their worship, in their credit, in their manufactures, in their art, in their labor, in their affections, in their tastes, in their habits, in their movements, and even in their eating, I declare that in right their voluntary slavery no more involves my responsibility than their stupidity compromises my intelligence; and, if in fact their servitude takes me in, so that I cannot get away from it; if it is notorious, as I cannot doubt, that the submission of six, seven, or eight millions of individuals to one man or to several men involves my own submission to this same man or to these same men,—I defy any one whomsoever to find in this act anything but a trap, and I declare that at no time has the barbarism of any people practised upon earth a more unmistakable brigandage.

To see, in fact, a moral coalition of eight millions of valets against one free man is to witness a spectacle of cowardice against the savagery of which one cannot invoke civilization without making it either ridiculous or odious in the eyes of cultivated people.

But I cannot believe that all my fellow-citizens deliberately feel the need of serving. What I feel, everybody must feel; what I think, everybody must think; for I am neither more or less than a man; I am under the same simple and laborious conditions to which the first worker that comes is subject. It astonishes me, it frightens me, to meet with every step that I take in life, with every thought that my brain welcomes, with every enterprise that I begin, with every coin that I need to earn, a law or a regulation that says to me: no passage this way; no thought that way; no enterprise in this direction; half of that coin must be left at this gate. Confronted with these manifold obstacles that appear on every hand, my intimidated mind sinks into brutishness; I know not which way to turn; I know not what to do or what to become.

Who, then, has added to the atmospheric scourges, to the decompositions of the air, to the insalubrities of climate, to the lightning which science has learned how to control, this occult and savage power, this maleficent genius, which awaits humanity at the cradle to cause it to be devoured by humanity? Who? Why, men themselves, who, not satisfied with the hostility of the elements, have also made men their enemies.

The masses, still too docile, are innocent of all the brutalities committed in their name and to their detriment; they are innocent of them, but they are not ignorant of them; I believe that, like myself, they feel them and are indignant at them; I believe that, like myself, they are in a hurry to have done with them; only, not clearly distinguishing causes, they know not how to act. It will be my endeavor to teach them something in this direction.

Let us begin by pointing out the guilty.

A. Bellegarigue.

[To be continued.]

The Literature of Anarchism.

A remarkable volume has recently been issued in the French language, valuable to all students of social questions and of especial interest to Anarchists. It is nothing less than a classified guide to the literature of Anarchism in all countries and tongues, including books, pamphlets, and newspapers, with titles; names of authors, editors, and publishers; and dates of issue. "Probably a little pamphlet of about thirty-two pages," the reader may say to himself before seeing it. But on seeing it he will be as surprised as I was to find it a bulky book of almost three hundred large octavo pages. As Elisée Reclus says in the preface: "I confess, for my part, that I did not know we were so rich; the importance that this still-incomplete collection has assumed is a great surprise to me." We are indebted for this work, which must have been one of great labor, to M. Nettlau, a Communist living in London.

Undoubtedly one of the most puzzling features of the compiler's task was that of evolving a scheme of classification for this "Bibliographie de l'Anarchie" (I had forgotten before to give the title) which would properly dispose of the various schools claiming to be Anarchis-

* There is a logical lapse here in the writer's statement; he probably means to say that abnegation practised by the mass profits only the few who preach it to the mass but do not practise it themselves.—Editor Liberty.

tic, without doing injustice to any. In my judgment, such a task is intrinsically incapable of accomplishment. To compile a consistent bibliography of Anarchy it is necessary first to determine what Anarchy is, after which it will be a comparatively easy matter to catalogue the works representing that which Anarchy has been decided to be. Then geography, language, and chronology will be the sole motives in the scheme of classification, alphabetical indices supplying a key to the whole. But, if the compiler starts, as Mr. Nettlau appears to have started, with the theory that all are Anarchists who so call themselves, he will promptly and continually come upon blendings and shadings and overlappings and contradictions and contrasts which no arrangement of divisions and subdivisions, however minute, and no system of cross-references, however elaborate, can possibly reduce to order, or shape satisfactorily to any, to say nothing of all. Mr. Nettlau's book abounds in proofs of this, although containing also plenty of evidence that it was his sincere endeavor to sink his partisanship. Spite of all his efforts to be impartial, the bias of Communism has had its marked effect. In commenting on this, I am moved by no spirit of captiousness. My main feeling is one of gratitude to Mr. Nettlau for the good work he has done. His book in any case is an extremely serviceable one, and the purpose of my criticism is to enable him to make his subsequent editions less imperfect.

At first glance Individualist Anarchism seems to have the place of honor in this compilation, the first thirty or forty pages being devoted to it mainly. But a closer examination shows that Individualist Anarchism is thus placed by the compiler on the theory that it is, or was, one of several precursory influences leading up to what he styles "Modern Anarchism," which had its beginning as a definitive movement in the final congresses of the Jurassian Federation at the initiative of Kropotkine and Reclus,—in other words, to "Anarchist Communism," to which the bulk of the volume is given. Of course, under such a scheme, the bulk properly belongs to that school, for Individualist Anarchism hardly exists as a movement outside of the United States and England, in spite of the fact that some of its earliest and most important sources belong to the European continent. But this is no excuse for a scheme of classification which, by implication, if not by direct assertion, treats Individualist Anarchism as a back number, and "Communist Anarchism" as the only Anarchism up-to-date. Under this scheme Proudhon, to whom a special chapter is devoted, is counted, of course, only a precursor, though there is nothing Anarchistic in "Communist Anarchism" that cannot be found in Proudhon's writings, while there is much in it that is authoritarian to which he would have lent no sanction. And even Bakounine, to my surprise, is not numbered among the purely orthodox. It seems that he was a "Collectivist Anarchist," whatever that may be. So that the chapter given to him appears immediately preceding the final refinement in the process which has culminated in "Communist Anarchism."

Now, it is almost needless to say that this arrangement is purely factitious, devised and executed for the purpose of sustaining a theory as to the evolution of Communism,—quite honestly, no doubt, but none the less unwarrantably. That theory is that the more or less rebellious spirits who, from the earliest period in the history of Socialism, have exhibited a growing aversion to the formal authoritarianism of State Socialism have after years of groping through a multitude of vagaries and experimental notions, such as Individualist Anarchism and Mutualism and extreme Manchesterism and Collectivist Anarchism, settled down at last with virtual unanimity upon Communism as the final and complete expression of the libertarian idea and tendency. Nothing could be falser. The truth is that the early rebellion against State Socialism was not prompted by a hatred of authoritarianism exclusively, but frequently—perhaps in most cases—by a hatred simply of formalism. This rebellion grew sporadically, men of force expressing it here and there in their own way. But, as time went on, the two elements of opposition to State Socialism began to crystallize into two distinct movements, and it was at about the same period that they received clear recognition as such. One crystallized into the revolt of the instinctive men, the anti-formalists, and dates as stated, from the final congresses of the Jurassian Federation, (1880), at which the Kropotkinians gained definitive ascendency; the other crystallized into the revolt of the rational men, the anti-authoritarians, and dates from the foundation of Liberty at Boston in 1881. Since then "Communist Anarchism" and Individualist Anarchism have commanded the attention of the world, being confused by the ignorant, and diametrically differentiated by the intelligent. Individualist Anarchism, therefore, instead of being one of numerous forerunners of Communism that have finally died away or been merged in it, represents a distinctly opposite tendency to that of Communism, which came into emphasis before the public contemporaneously with it.

Now, Individualist Anarchism proposing to substitute for the existing order as well as for the order contemplated by a completer State Socialism a thorough libertarianism, and "Communist Anarchism" proposing to substitute simply a formless and unorganized authoritarianism denying liberty in some of the most important of its applications, it is obvious that the two cannot properly be catalogued in a "Bibliography of Anarchy," for one *is* Anarchism and the other *isn't*. Nevertheless, there being those who think that this can be done and who insist upon attempting it, it is incumbent upon them to award to each of these schools its proper dignity and treat them in accordance with the lines of evolution upon which they have developed.

That this has not been done in the "Bibliography" in question is my chief criticism upon it. That in dealing with so large a mass of material Mr. Nettlau should have made some minor errors is not wonderful. On the contrary, the wonder is that he has done his work so accurately. Some of his errors, however, grow out of his erroneous scheme of classification. For instance, Robert Reitzel's unclassifiable "Arme Teufel," as well as Bachmann's "Zukunft," which leaned strongly towards Individualist Anarchism, are classed with Most's "Freiheit" and the Chicago "Arbeiterzeitung" in order to swell the list of "Communist Anarchist" journals in the German language, while my "Libertas" (the German edition of Liberty, in issuing which the Schumms coöperated with me) and the German translation of my "State Socialism and Anarchism," as well as all the works of our comrade, John Henry Mackay, and of Dr. Arthur Mülberger, the German champion of Proudhon, are placed in the early pages of the book under the heading, "German Anarchism from 1840 to 1880," in order to represent us as among the erratic precursors, though all of these appeared subsequent to 1880 (excepting one or two of Mülberger's) and most of them subsequent to 1890. Again, Lum's "Alarm" is placed in the "Communist Anarchist" section of the book, in a list of journals published in the United States. This list, if somewhat heterogeneous, is avowedly distinguished by Mr. Nettlau from Individualist Anarchist journals in the English language; yet Lum's "Alarm," in the main, taught the economics and ultimate politics of Individualist Anarchism. Lum himself, too, though characterized by Mr. Nettlau as a Mutualist, appears in the Communist category, and not elsewhere. If he was a Mutualist,—that is, a Proudhonian,—why is he not classed with Mutualists? The same error is made regarding Voltairine de Cleyre. And to Communism is given the credit of the "Twentieth Century's" economic symposium, "The Why I Am's," though of the six contributors to it named by Mr. Nettlau only John Most is a Communist,—Yarros, Lum, and Tucker being Individualist Anarchists, Stuart an Individualist, and Holmes a nondescript. And, most astonishing of all, Henrik Ibsen, certainly the most famous of living Individualist Anarchists, is mentioned but once in the book, and then near the end, in a miscellaneous chapter on modern libertarian literature. It is not strange that the Communists are loth to concede Ibsen to the Individualist Anarchists, but that he belongs with them nobody can deny. Perhaps we ought to congratulate ourselves that Mr. Nettlau does not claim him as a Communist.

Errors of a different sort, such as that which represents Spooner's "Trial by Jury" as an attack on the jury as an institution, I have not time or space for pointing out. Nor have I the disposition to do so, save as an aid to Mr. Nettlau in his work. I am sure that all my readers will join me in thanking him for his great service, even though his bias partially thwarted his undoubted desire to be fair.

The price of the "Bibliographie de l'Anarchie" is five francs, and the volume can be obtained of P. V. Stock, 8 Galerie du Théâtre-Français, Paris. The compiler's address is M. Nettlau, 36 Fortune Gate Terrace, Willesden, London, N. W.

T.

The young and reverend Casson, whom Mr. Byington quotes in his A. L.-W. C. department as saying that it "takes less brains to be clever as an individualist than as a Socialist," must, if he shares the view of his fellow Socialist, Mr. Sidney Webb, have a very poor opinion of the intellectual capacity of American Socialists. Mr. Webb, after his visit to America several years ago, announced to his Fabian friends at home that in America the

brains of the labor movement are in the Anarchist camp. Now, if the comparatively feeble brain-power required, in the opinion of the young and reverend Casson, for the making of a clever Anarchist is virtually all the brain-power of which the American labor movement can boast, the obvious inference is that American Socialists are tiresome blockheads. Which nobody can deny.

My readers are entitled to an apology for the very objectionable arrangement of matter in this issue of Liberty. The alternative was a still more objectionable delay in publication. The difficulty arose out of a *faux pas* in "make-up," any repetition of which I shall be wise enough to avoid.

A new illustration of the dishonesty to which fanatics will sometimes descend. Funk & Wagnalls, proprietors of the Prohibitionist "Voice," lately addressed a series of questions to a list of literary men, in which list I was included. The questions related to the advisability of the use of alcoholic liquors by literary men. I answered them as concisely as I could. The various answers received have been printed in the "Voice," but those which I sent have been so mutilated that I am made to appear as opposed to the use of liquor by literary men, whereas, if the answers had been printed as written, it would have been seen that I am in favor of such use with certain conditions and limitations. If Funk & Wagnalls lied about the others who responded to their questions as they have lied about me, their symposium is more liable than reliable.

Sexual association with a girl under eighteen by her consent has been made in many States, by legal fiction, an act of rape. Now the cry goes up that rape shall be made a capital offence. *Doux pays!* as Forain would exclaim.

A Hint to Father Confessors.

A young French priest, being overwhelmed by the number of people that came to his confessional, announced from his pulpit that thereafter, in order to prevent the crush and confusion, he would hear the confessions of his flock in categories, and in the following order: Mondays, thieves; Tuesdays, murderers; Wednesdays, perjurers; Thursdays, blasphemers; Fridays, forgers; Saturdays, women of light character. The plan worked to perfection. From that moment the young priest's confession-box was completely deserted.

Interest.

Interest is what is paid for the use of money. Undoubtedly interest is paid for the use of other things than money, as when a house or a piano is rented; but other things command a price for the use of them only because restrictions upon the issue and loan of money make it impossible, except by paying a price for its use, to borrow money with which these other things might be bought.

So it is that the question of interest hangs upon the money question; and whoever would understand how it is that a large part of the products of labor is taken from the producers by those who do not labor must have some idea of money and finance.

Money and finance! Oh, horrible! exclaims the reader; I never could understand anything about finance!

Nevertheless, it is a matter of life and death. We are in misery now, because we don't understand finance; we shall be destroyed, unless we set about understanding it. The people that grasps clear ideas on the money question will be the people best adapted to its environment, and will survive; should no people prove capable, as a people, of grasping clear ideas on the question, there can be no doubt that the whole of the nineteenth-century civilization, such as it is, will perish.

For we are past the stage where it was possible for individual adaptation to secure the survival of the individual in the midst of a hostile society. We are so far developed socially that the new conceptions required for further social advance must be received by a part of all the social members large enough to determine the opinion of the whole, before they can have any influence in improving the material prosperity of the social whole. Otherwise the individual of highly-developed ideas will be crushed by the pressure of a more barbarous society, which he alone is unable to enlighten.

Moreover, we have reached a point in social development where the social assimilation of correct ideas about money is imperative. The astonishing state of affairs with which we now find ourselves unexpectedly confronted in these last days of the century is wholly a problem of distribution. Things enough, in all conscience, we have, and we have unlimited power of making more things,—enough for everybody to have plenty; but, strange to say, for some hitherto unperceived cause, the people who want to go to work to make things cannot, and the people who want things cannot get them, and everything is in an economic muddle.

As I said, it is a problem of more skilfully dividing up what we have produced, or what we can produce,—a problem of distribution; and a problem of distribution is a money problem, because money, after all, is but a tool to accomplish distribution.

In trying to get light on this paramount question, begin by discarding everything that is usually read or said about it.

On general principles, when we are looking for a solution of a social problem, we must expect to reach conclusions quite opposed to the usual opinions on the subject; otherwise it would be no problem. We must expect to have to attack, not what is commonly regarded as objectionable, but what is commonly regarded as entirely proper and normal.

Therefore, begin by disbelieving all the usual talk, and all that is printed in newspapers and the regular run of books upon money. A good deal of what they say is true, but it is so mixed with what is false that, until you have your fundamental ideas straightened out, by which to discriminate for yourself, you will be as much misled by what is true as by what is false.

As for incomprehensibility, don't for a moment imagine that these money and finance questions are as complicated as the people who write about them make them out to be. For the most part, these writers do not in the least understand the matters they write about, and they inevitably jumble the mere accidents of the practical workings with the essential principles of the theory.

In the concrete money is complicated enough; in the abstract it is simplicity itself. Let me try to give you some clear idea of the simple bottom principle.

In the first place they will tell you, with a profound air of wisdom, that the only really real money is gold and silver. Money-metals they call them, in their supercilious, round-eyed superiority, as if there could be any inward unweighable virtue in gold and silver, rather than in any other metal, or even than in any other substance, which must forever make them the only possible money! That is the first falsity that you will have to deny to yourself in your own mind, irrespective of my denial of it here.

For in these matters each must think for himself. Believe nothing on the authority of others. Weigh and understand and decide for yourself.

True enough it is that gold and silver have been much used for money, have in their time served a good purpose; but it is also true that these gold and silver coins are but a sort of merchandise themselves, and to exchange other merchandise for them is, after all, nothing but a kind of barter.

Besides this, it is long since gold and silver were the only money. For many years now paper documents of various kinds have been used as money,—have been paid out and received for goods and services in final settlement. So that gold and silver are evidently not the only money. Paper promises, we see with our eyes, are just as good as gold and silver themselves as a machine for exchanging the real things, the bread and meat and clothes and houses, which are what we really want. Better, in fact, because, if we could use paper documents only, we might use the gold and silver coins and bricks for far better purposes than jingling them in pockets and passing them from hand to hand, from purse to till and from till to purse, until they are worn to dust again. Sheer waste, that is, of good gold and silver, useful as they might be in their incorrodibility above tin and copper for sauce-pans, fly-screens, and many other purposes.

If paper will do, why not, in common sense, use paper?

Yet here our wiseacres will step forward, put on their spectacles, and solemnly announce that, as long as there is gold and silver to pay off the paper promises with, the paper promises are all right, but—and so on.

True enough, in a sense, too, this is, and once upon a time it was thought necessary for the man who paid out paper promises to have an equal amount of coin-money in his strong-boxes to redeem his paper promises. But now there is not enough coin in the world to redeem more than a small part of the paper promises that are used every day.

The truth is that, as the exchanges of the world increased, and the time came when there was not enough gold and silver to effect these exchanges, so that people had to resort to paper promises, with gold and silver as security, the exchanges of the world increased so vastly that now there is not enough gold and silver in the world even for security for the paper promises that are required as a machine to exchange things.

Consequently the paper money of to day, in spite of the demonstrations of the wiseacres, is not secure. There is three or four or eight or ten times as much paper as there is coin which the paper promises to pay, so that the time must come, and does come every little while, when there is more coin wanted than can be had for redeeming the promises, and one of the financial crises, or panics, ensues,—one of these panics that are becoming so ominously frequent and fatal.

Still, up to panic point, we see for ourselves that paper promises serve sufficiently well. Were it not that they promise to do what it is well known to be impossible to do, they might serve even better. But, notwithstanding this drawback, paper it is now-a-days, and paper of some sort apparently it must be.

Let us drop, then, this word money, along with the old conception of gold as the only money. What we want to do is to trade, to exchange, by the easiest means. Paper so far is the easiest means. Call it no longer money; call it currency, simply for convenience of nomenclature. Paper currency we know is possible; it seems to be inevitable; as a fact, it is almost the only currency used.

Consider now the fact that a certain quantity of this paper or other currency is needed to carry on the horse trades and innumerable other trades in these wide-spread United States, in this wider-spread globe surface. As things are at present, what currency we have is restricted in quantity in two ways. The first of these restrictions is the surviving belief that gold or silver is the only possible commodity that can redeem paper currency. Although it is absurd to suppose that a currency is safe when there is enough gold and silver to redeem a part of the currency, yet the superstition survives that a certain proportion must be maintained, and that, although we may require normally thrice as much paper as gold, yet it would not be "safe" to have more than twice as much.

The second restriction is the method by which alone more currency can be obtained when it is needed.

Think of currency, all the time, as simply paper documents, destitute of value in themselves, but necessary to keep the running accounts straight between men. Statisticians will point out that by far the greater part of the business of the world is done by checks and drafts and such commercial devices, and will urge that currency is really a trivial matter, almost a superfluity.

Anybody who has passed through the financial crisis of the year 1893 will know how essential this matter of currency is. During the height of the panic no currency could be obtained. The consequence was that business almost stopped.

Other devices were used as far as possible, especially credit; people kept on buying groceries and the necessaries of life; what few factories kept at work had to

put off the payment of wages for week after week. In every way people tried to get along without currency. Nevertheless it was only demonstrated how indispensable currency is. Checks and mercantile paper are really founded upon currency, being all of them promises to pay currency; credit does well enough for a while, in the expectation of currency to settle balances, but neither commercial paper or credit can take the place of the organized credit that we call currency.

This currency, these documents that pass from hand to hand, without endorsement and in final settlement, must be had, and must be had every year in greater quantities as the trade of the world grows.

Now, in order to get these instruments of exchange, what do we do? Manufacture them or buy them? By no means. We have to borrow them, borrow them from the banks. We do not realize it, most of us plain people, because we so seldom come in contact with banks and banking devices. Most of us do our work and get our wages at the end of the week, pay our grocer's and butcher's bills, and think little of where the bills come from or go to. Where they go is plain enough; the butcher or the grocer deposits them in some banks; but where they come from is not so plain.

Where does the bank get them?

The bank gets them from a set of politicians at Washington, who are in the service of the banks and bankers.

They have these bills printed, and lend them to the banks at a charge of one per cent., which is called a tax, but is the same as one per cent. interest.

The banks lend them for as high a rate of interest as they can get, and, the scarcer currency is, the more they can get for it.

Remember, too, that the banks do not lend without taking security from the borrower. He who would borrow from a bank must either deposit with the bank some tangible security, or he must give his personal note for it, which is the same as pledging his stock, whatever it may be. The bank lends him no wealth, because he must have wealth himself to pledge, to the amount he wishes to borrow. All the bank does is lend its name to certify to his solvency. And, for this insurance of his credit, so to speak, the bank can make him pay at least six per cent., lending the bills that it receives for one per cent. for six, or even more, in proportion to the stress, up to one or two per cent., not yearly, but monthly, on a certain class of loans.

By the necessity that people are under of depositing their currency with a bank in order to do business, and by the equal necessity they are under of borrowing from the bank at times, the banks are enabled to tax us all, on every transaction, six per cent. and upwards.

Nor is the payment of this forced tax the greatest wrong. Indeed, we might pay all they demand, and still be happy, were it not for a far greater ill that is involved. This ill is the intolerable restriction on the amount of work that can be done, on the amount of employment that can be obtained, on the amount of wealth and comfort that can be produced,—a restriction that is caused by the arbitrary limitation of the currency-supply.

We see at the present moment thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands, of men throughout the country anxious to go to work to produce each the things that the others want to buy. They are longing, all of them, to exchange the products of their labor. The coal-miners dying because they are not allowed to dig coal to warm the shoemakers, and going without shoes which the shoemakers may make, but are forbidden to exchange with the coal-miners. And so it is throughout the industrial world; one cannot produce, because another cannot produce. Yet the bankers will tell you—and probably it is true—that there is a vast hoard or currency which they would be only too glad to lend. Yes, no doubt, but at rates of interest higher than anybody can pay for it; or, if at lower rates, than under conditions regarding time of repayment that make it useless to borrow. On loans for a definite period not less than five per cent.—for the most part six—will satisfy their demand. In other kinds of business, when they cannot make a sale, they know the price is too high, and put it down. The banks do not put the price down, and will not. Why? Because the banks have a monopoly.

How is that? you ask. Cannot anybody start a bank? Yes, in a way; in another way, decidedly not. In the first place, there are laws which absolutely forbid the issue of any more bank currency, except by the deposit, not of any good security, but of government bonds which practically cannot be had.

In the second place, there is about as much paper currency already in existence as the gold and silver in existence will warrant, and, as long as gold and silver are the only legal security for currency, there cannot be much more currency.

But why not, you will ask, leave other things for security, beside gold and silver, if there is not enough of these?

Here is precisely the trouble. There is a United States law heavily taxing any such issue of currency, and there are separate State laws making it a criminal offence to issue or pass any other currency than that authorized by the government.

So that the monopoly of the banks, although not a formal monopoly, is maintained by so many legal restrictions that it is just as close a monopoly really as if it were formally so constituted.

Were it not so, in crises like the present business concerns of high standing would pay off their employees in small due-tickets, which the employees in turn could pay to the coal-dealers and hatters, who would receive them on the credit of the standing of the issuing concern. Shortly institutions would spring up of even wider connections, to make a business of handling such wage-tickets, issuing their own in place of them, and a currency system would grow up, undefended by law, dependent on its merits for its existence, and furnishing a method of exchange without any interest charge at all.

This is what is meant by free banking. The old State banks were not free at all, but subject to as many restrictions as banks now are, with the same result of making their services expensive and inefficient, or even detrimental.

Really free currency means, in the first place, no legal-tender laws.

Why? Because a really sound currency people will receive on its merits. Only an unsound currency needs a legal-tender law to compel people to take it. Our present currency needs it because it is necessarily unsound; there is supposed to be enough gold to redeem it, but everybody knows that there is not; consequently it requires law to compel people to receive it. Take away the law, and the fact that a currency commands confidence is assurance of the sufficiency of its security.

Really free currency means, in the second place, no legal requirement of any particular kind of wealth to redeem it,—not gold or silver or anything else,—leaving that to the judgment of those who are to receive it, but who cannot be compelled to receive it, in the absence of compulsory legal-tender laws, if they do not like the security.

Really free currency means, in the third, fourth, fifth, and nth places, the removal of all other taxes, inspections, certifications, and restrictions of every kind.

In the absence of such restrictions, imagine the rapid growth of wealth, and the equity in its distribution, that would result. Thus, for a supposition, a group of men would pledge their possessions, houses, workshops, goods, and chattels to a sufficient amount.

They would print notes of certain small amounts,—one dollar, two dollars, and so on,—and scrip of even smaller denominations. A farmer needs to stock his farm. Now he must mortgage it for six, eight, ten per cent. Then he would go to the free bank and pledge his farm, and receive the use of its notes, a handful of them, to the amount of half the value of his farm, for which he would pay not six, or four, or even two per cent. Three-quarters of one or one per cent. would be all he would have to pay.

Why. Because there would be other free banks competing with this bank, so that the price of currency would shortly come down to the mere cost of running the bank, paying the clerks, and printing the notes.

Although starting as local concerns, and at first commanding only local confidence, it would be but a short time before a system of currency would be developed that would extend over the world, as even now bankers' letters of credit are international, while most government notes are only national.

Enough. If you have not yet caught the idea, keep thinking about it, and you will eventually seize it.

In doing away with interest for the use of money, we do away, at one blow, with interest of all kinds, whether called interest, or under the name of house-rent, dividends, or share of profits; the trifling amount that would be paid for the use of currency would not, properly speaking, be interest at all, but wages, paid for their labor to the people who made it their business to provide currency.

All that is produced, it must be borne in mind, naturally belongs to the producer. It is only by the artificial legal restrictions that we have permitted to exist that a large part of the product is taken from the producer and handed to the idler in the forms of rent and interest.

By abolishing these we permit the producer to retain his whole product, to the advantage of all concerned; for every one knows, and no one better than the idlers themselves, that man's greatest happiness is in congenial and productive labor.

But a far greater advantage will accompany the abolition of interest. Not only does interest now take a large slice of the proceeds without giving any equivalent, but it actually prevents people from producing anything like what they could produce otherwise.

To go to work at all, land is essential; to work to any advantage, exchange is essential. No machinery ever invented has the wealth-producing power of division of labor and exchange of products.

Yet we have so arranged it that, before anybody can go to work, he must pay a tax to somebody who owns the land, and, before anybody can trade, he must pay a tax to somebody who owns the tools of exchange.

Remove these bonds, and the volume of production would more than suffice for all human wants.

In doing away with interest, the cause of inequality in material circumstances will be done away with; the frightful scene of overfed luxury and of helpless destitution that now shocks us will disappear.

For ages the dream of mankind has been equality; for ages the achievement of equality has eluded our efforts.

Even now men's minds are filled with devices which are expected to at least bring equality nearer,—devices such as the taxation of inheritances and the taxation of large incomes; all bungling attempts to remedy by legislation the ills which are the outcome of previous legislation.

The only real remedy for inequality is the discovery of the cause of inequality, and the removal of the cause if that be possible.

Up to now the prevailing opinion has been that inequality of fortune is caused by inequality of ability. You are poor, sneer the well-to-do, because you are not as capable as we are. It is because we do more that we have more.

Nor is such an opinion without plausibility. There unquestionably is so great a difference in the abilities of men, as well as difference in their wealth, that it seems not unreasonable, at first blush, to connect the one with the other.

But, when we learn that the boast of the well-to-do is without foundation, another view prevails.

When we learn that the only work that is work at all, economically speaking, is productive work, and that the well-to-do are well-to-do in proportion as they do less productive work, and depend more upon other people's earnings; when we find that they have, as it is called, an independent income, which, clever or stupid, industrious or lazy, honorable or scoundrel, they continue to receive, we begin to doubt the correctness of the opinion which so loudly announces that men have only what they merit.

Yet even when we have reached this point of questioning the validity of interest, we are still at a loss. It seems so reasonable, it is undoubtedly so just, that one should receive for lending what another is willing to pay that we are quite baffled in our inquiries. The old-fashioned indignation against the money-lender seems so misplaced, for we perceive quite clearly that the money-lender is doing only what the borrower is anxious that he should do.

Still another contradiction comes when we reflect that this interest, which seems so natural, is, from

another point of view, quite absurd and impossible.

We all know the astonishing stories of the accumulating power of compound interest,—how a dollar, set to grow in the year one, would ow outvalue several worlds,—and we can figure for ourselves that these statements are substantially true. When we consider, moreover, that a good deal of all interest is compound interest, because many people who receive interest do not spend it all, but invest some of it to draw more interest, we see that it is impossible; that at a certain point the rate of increase is greater than the whole product of the globe could pay.

It is only when we begin to understand that the borrower does not really pay freely,—that he is compelled by a monopoly, backed by rifles, to pay what he must,—that we begin to see the cause of inequality, and to understand the remedy.

Imagine, then, a society in which equality prevails. Does it seem absurd to fancy a hod-carrier as learned and as polished as a physician, or a stevedore as a companion of a college professor? It does seem a mere fantastic flight of fancy; it is really the goal toward which society is tending.

For there is nothing intrinsically degrading in the work of a hod-carrier. There is no reason why the college student, who has delighted in rowing and has been a fair student besides, should not choose hod-carrying as a congenial athletic occupation, and continue a cultivated and well-bred man. The excessive amount of labor which now bends the backs and breaks the hearts of the hand-workers is quite unnecessary; the free society of the future will need but three or four hours of so exhausting toil.

Besides this, with substantial equality of reward will come equal power to secure the advantages of education and leisure. The hod-carrier will have money and leisure enough for self-cultivation, enough for his son's and daughters' college-going and European travel, and all the refinements that anybody else has.

Then, too, will vanish the odious "social distinctions" that now sicken. He's only this, and she's only that, quite unfit to associate with our superfine selves, whom somebody else in turn sniffs at, will all come to an end; and in mere arithmetical and financial truth and justice will be laid a foundation for the brotherhood of man which sentiment alone can never establish. John Beverley Robinson.

A New Departure.

To the Editor of Liberty.

The Legitimation League, of London, which has had a somewhat passive existence since its formation four years ago, has now entered upon a "new crusade," as some writer put it,—*viz.*, the advocacy of the principle of sexual freedom, or freedom in sexual relationships. If the League carries on its suggested public propaganda of this principle as energetically as some of its present members have done recently in magazines, pamphlets, and papers, we may look forward to some interesting developments.

The adoption of new principles in a movement has its consequences, and the result of the addition of the one given above is that Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, Mr. Greevz Fisher, and others, have left the League. On the other hand, there has been an infusion of new blood. When I mention that Oswald Dawson, George Bedborough, Louie Bedborough, Seymour, Ladcock, Rockell, and Wastall are still within its ranks, there is no immediate cause for concluding that the work will lag for lack of ability, energy, and enthusiasm.

I herewith append the objects of the League as now amended:

I. To educate public opinion in the direction of freedom in sexual relationships.

II. To create a machinery for acknowledging offspring born out of wedlock, and to secure for them equal rights with legitimate children.

The membership, I should add, is open to anyone who subscribes in writing to its objects, and contributes not less than sixty cents per annum to its funds. The second object, as I have remarked elsewhere, smacks too much of the parliamentary, but from the biennial report I conclude that there will be very little attempt in such a direction (indeed, the tendency of most of the members now is against it).

It is earnestly desired that all interested parties, of both sexes, should lend assistance in this very important matter, and, with a view of bringing the league's objects and the correlative teachings before the public notice, it is proposed to issue a monthly organ, "The Adult: a journal for the advancement of freedom in sexual relationships," at the democratic price of one penny, which organ, it is hoped, will have a large measure of support in the United States as well as in Great Britain. A nice room has been secured, too, at John street, London, and this will be utilized in due course as a social club for the members and friends, and for the transaction of the League's business; *pro tem*, they are enjoying their meetings at Mr. Bedborough's "Holborn Restaurant." Altogether the prospects of success are bright,—but what will the *moralists*, the philistines, and the prudes say? No doubt they will have their say, but so will the champions of "freedom in sexual relationships." The press has boycotted them largely in the past, but every week brings news of opening columns, and, the sooner the fight begins, the better for a clear understanding of the subject at issue. The address of the secretary is: Geo. Bedborough, 127 East Street Buildings, London, W., England. William Gilmour.

Communism's New Tactics.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The smallest paper yet published in the unjustified typography is the "New Era" of Lakebay, Wash., an Anarchist-Communist monthly of four very small pages, not well enough printed to be a credit to the typographical cause. It gives much attention to the land question. In No. 3, just at hand, it calls on the down-trodden farmers of its neighborhood to refuse all payment of taxes and to repudiate principal and interest of all mortgages. If the attempt is made to evict any one for non-payment of tax or mortgage, the sheriff is to be allowed to take all the trouble he likes, and the family are to move back into the house (with the neighbors' help) as soon as he is out of sight. If forfeited premises are offered for sale, the occupant is to advertise in the county paper that the purchaser will not be allowed to take possession. No open or personal violence is to be used, however, in any case; but, if the intruder insists on settling in the disputed house, he is to be warned that, while he stays there, "nothing of his will be safe in that neighborhood." But at the same time he is to be told that, if he will build himself a house on any land not actually occupied and used, all the neighbors will help him build.

This is said to be the policy pursued by the Irish Land League, but I doubt whether the idea of making peace with the intruder by letting him have the unoccupied part of your land is of Irish origin.

It is clear from all indications that the English-speaking Anarchist-Communists of the United States are drifting away from the idea of violence, at least as a present-day policy, and toward that of passive resistance. So much the better for the cause of progress. The above scheme is doubtless strictly passive to a Communist's eyes, since the only invasive or retaliatory measures proposed are against property.

Stephen T. Byington.

Wise Words from Mexico.

[Monterey, Mexico, Times.]

Some friendly hand has sent the "Times" a copy of a paper entitled "Facts from Denver." Its principal object appears to be that of advancing the cause of silver. It proposes a method of increasing the circulating medium of the western States, which, while not altogether a new proposition in principle, will be new to a great majority of its readers and ours.

It is always interesting to follow any effort to bring relief to trade by means of an enlargement of exchange facilities, without arbitrary measures. Such plans appeal to the judgments of mankind individually and, if accepted, are thereby shown to contain some good; if neglected for want of practical utility, nobody has been harmed. And it usually happens that, when there is a want felt by the public and various schemes are proposed to supply it, though these be defective, they will suggest something that will finally emerge from the chaos and prove itself to be a practicable thing.

Of course we think, and have no doubt, that the proper and real solution of the monetary question is in free coinage and free banking, and not in laws to force the use or the disuse, the parity or the disparity, of any articles. Then, if gold appears to be more serviceable than silver, either as a standard or as a medium, or as both, it will be adopted by those who can afford to have the best; but others will not be forced to stand idle for want of money, if they choose to accept silver and find that it pays their way. By resisting such a solution the party in power in the United States is tempting a forced conversion of debts to the silver standard at a future day on some turn of politics. As for free banking, the idea, we are sorry to say, seems to be far from the thoughts of American politicians of all parties. If ten thousand producers wish to make paper issues, based on their mutual credit, content to have them circulate among themselves as a means of exchange free of the special toll of usury, they are not permitted to carry out any such plan, however solvent they may be, and whatever guarantees they offer that every note issued will be redeemed by acceptance for merchandise or services by either of them on demand, at par with coin; because the idea prevails, both among the financiers and the masses, that nobody should be allowed to do what everybody else does not perceive the wisdom or necessity of doing. This species of prohibition is decidedly against the method of industrial evolution. The rule as to such progress is improvement by trial and selection of the most effective economic forms. Under free choice any error in method is an immediate instruction to all observers, and the errors can be abandoned at once; but, when legislation steps in to prescribe and proscribe beyond its proper province, which is to prevent fraud and robbery, the inevitable errors of the legislators are riveted upon the business affected, and the evil may be of long duration before a repeal can be had. Even then some other ill-fitting provisions are the most probable sequence, and there are leaders and a party bent upon resisting the evidence that they had perpetrated a mischief. Inasmuch as their personal interests are not concerned,—assuming that the lawmakers are honest and not mercenary,—pride has play and renders them stubborn, in grievous contrast to the studious care of the industrial man to reform whatever he finds working ill in his business.

There are millions of dollars' worth of wealth in every State, which could be made available for the ultimate redemption of banknotes, and the owners of the wealth and the men who desire to work for them could escape such interest charges as paralyze industry in the western States, if they were free to organize their credit; but this must not be done, for parties, however diverse in their tenets, from McKinley to Bryan, are agreed that there shall be no contrivance permitted in the nature of currency that does not emanate from the government. But not to digress further from the purpose at present to notice what is proposed in "Facts from Denver," it is, briefly, that the State government, say of Colorado, shall receive and store silver bullion and issue for each ounce a certificate and a note, the latter receivable for taxes for fifty cents; the certificate entitles its holder to the ounce of bullion on payment of fifty cents. Thus every ounce would be monetized at fifty cents, and the variable excess value would be the market value of the certificates. This plan appears to promise entire safety, and puts no pressure upon the owner to surrender his marginal property in the bullion. As the notes would be a clear addition to the circulating medium, they would not have to bear any high rate of charge for the issuing,—simply enough to cover the expenses of warehousing the silver, printing the notes, and comptrollership.

Important as this plan may be for the western States, it should set men thinking that the more important thing still is the liberty of contract, by which many other excellent expedients, to some persons perhaps less clear, but in principle the same, could be made available to release industry from usurious tribute. Professed financial experts may assert the inutility of silver or of paper that could be based upon the values of plantations and vast stores of insured goods, with ample margin of security, because, they say, the laboring man gets nothing without working for it. The truth often is that, when the laboring man stands idle, there is a visible connection between his enforced idleness and the price which some men of property would have to pay for the hire of money to set that laborer at work. The property-owner may

have double or quadruple value of his own to give as security, but he will think twice before contracting an obligation to pay gold with the bank rate and conditions as to time and foreclosure, whereas the same property-owner would be fearless and enterprising, to hire a number of laborers and make many improvements of prospective advantage, could he be permitted to join with others and issue, through their bank, a note receivable for any goods they have sold or for sale, but without obligation to keep a specie reserve. Such a plan would include silver, but would not exclude wheat, corn, wool, cotton, iron, lead, tobacco, coffee, sugar, rice, and many other articles from being virtually monetized by the producers and merchants coöperating; and, instead of production being paralyzed as now in the United States, employment would be general, and consumption unchecked by fear or enforced idleness.

The low rate of interest reported from eastern centres is simply the evidence that borrowers with the security required are not to be found who dare take the money and put it in business at their risk; and, when a western man wants money in ordinary business, he does not get it at any such rate as the New York financial reports quote, but at a rate which cannot but be perilous to most enterprises, especially during a period of falling prices.

A Chance for Action.

The address on the new special jury act, delivered by the editor of Liberty before the Social Reform Club on May 25, seemed convincing to the majority of those present, and promptly bore important fruit. On the following Sunday, at the regular meeting of the Central Labor Union, Comrade James McGill, who is the delegate of the plasterers' union to that body and an enthusiastic worker in the cause of Anarchism, introduced a resolution embodying some of the central points of the lecture (to which he had listened) and calling for a mass meeting to protest against the new jury law. It was adopted without a dissenting voice, and is given in full below:

Whereas, the legislature of the State of New York for 1896 passed a special jury law whereby the trial of important criminal cases will be taken out of the hands of ordinary juries and placed in the hands of special juries drawn from a special panel of at least three thousand men; and

Whereas, special jury commissioners have been appointed under this law in the counties of New York and Kings,—the only counties to which this law applies,—and are now engaged in selecting special jury lists; and

Whereas, this law is suspicious in its origin, having been passed at the suggestion of Justice Barrett, whose decisions from the bench have generally been hostile to the rights and interests of labor; and

Whereas, it creates a new departure in the judicial branch of our government by placing the selection and control of special juries and of the special jury commissioners in the hands of the judiciary; and

Whereas, by exempting from ordinary jury duty the three thousand men selected for the special jury list, it so alters the ordinary jury list as to make it less representative of the community at large, and thereby strikes a blow at the jury system; and

Whereas, by the qualifications which it prescribes for special jury duty, it excludes from the special jury box all men of independent mind, and fills it with mere tools for the execution of unjust and tyrannical designs; and

Whereas, a machine has thus been created for trial by the classes of questions deeply affecting the liberty and welfare of the masses; and

Whereas, this virtual transformation in our form of government has been effected in secrecy through an apparent conspiracy of silence on the part of the press, so that a great majority of the people are ignorant that such a thing has happened; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Central Labor Union cause a mass meeting to be held at an early date in Cooper Union, or some other suitable hall in the city of New York, to which all citizens, and especially those interested in the cause of labor and liberty, shall be invited, for the purpose of ventilating this iniquity and devising ways and means for its undoing, and that a special committee of five be now appointed for the carrying out of this resolution.

The committee appointed in pursuance of this resolution consists of James McGill (chairman), William J. O'Brien, James Fitzgerald, Louis Wolders, and Daniel Harris, and is actively engaged in fulfilling the duty assigned it. Perhaps the mass-meeting will be held before the appearance of Liberty's next issue. It is hoped that every phase of the labor movement will be adequately represented, and that the meeting will be a great success. Those Anarchists whom Liberty's educational process wearies and who are always worrying because "nothing practical" is being done are here reminded of the opportunity before them. Any one wishing to lend a hand should address James McGill, 744 East One-hundred-and seventy-seventh street, New York.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Belvidere, N. J.
☞ For the present the fortnightly supply of targets will be maintained by sending members a special monthly circular, alternating with the issue of Liberty.

My supply of targets is running a good deal lower than it used to. Perhaps this is because friends outside the Corps are reminded of its existence only half as often as when Liberty was a fortnightly. I hope some of them will keep a sharper eye out for utterances that we can use. The greatest results in the world are achieved by persistent pegging away, and I have good reason for being sure that the Corps is doing more of this faithful pegging away than are the comrades who have no regular appointment of work for the cause. But we must have targets. I never could see why a larger number did not join the Corps itself; but at least you can send in occasional targets, if you will only keep your eyes open for the opportunities that are constantly appearing. Looking for targets will be an educational process to yourself, sharpening your perception of the relation of Anarchism to the things common people think and talk about. I speak from experience, having all along looked out more targets myself than any other one person. Probably, by hook or by crook, I could furnish them all myself; but I am not anxious to try.

I think papers are generally the best targets, but am glad to use the names of influential persons sometimes.

Target, both sections.—Herbert N. Casson, of the Workingmen's Church, Lynn, Mass., is a young, energetic, and influential State Socialist leader; not a Christian, I believe, although he calls himself "Rev." He lately said:

> We are not civilized enough yet to abolish government and discharge all the police, as philosophical Anarchists propose to do. If our park regulations were abolished, every shrub would be torn up. If the bicycle laws were repealed, it would be impossible to cross the streets. Remember, there is not a single college in America that teaches self-control; and public ownership is for that purpose—to make us fit to be free. Spencer himself declares that his "Law of Equal Freedom" applies only to "straight" men, in a perfect society; and Socialism is an industrial expedient to make crooked men straight. . . . It takes less brains to be clever as an individualist than as a Socialist; and it sounds well to declaim about "individual rights" and "non invasion of personal liberty," but it won't work in a world of crooked people. Houses are not built with phrases.

Remind him that philosophical Anarchists do not, in general, propose to discharge all the police. Show him that freedom is workable among men such as now exist. Show the error of expecting public ownership to make us any fitter to be free than we are now.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

In Defence of Prison Bars.

[Continued from page 1.]

Comrade Fulton to realize that the space thus wasted is equivalent, in his eight pages of three columns each, to about a column and a half of his leaded minion reading-matter, or in a year (fifty-two issues) to seventy-eight columns, which is again equivalent to *more than three issues* of the "Age of Thought." In other words, to gain a pretended æsthetic advantage which I dispute, and which, to say the least, is doubtful, he gives his readers, in reality, only forty-nine numbers of his paper annually, while appearing to give them fifty-two. To my thinking it is poor economy. Yet it has a consoling aspect. Were these three issues not thus wasted, who can say that, instead of being devoted to exposition of Anarchism, they might not be utilized in further emphasis of Comrade Fulton's weekly caution to his readers to look out for their kidneys when they find stains on their linen? T.